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THE

WORKING MAN'S PROGRAMME.

(ARBEITER-PROGRAMM)

AN ADDRESS

BY

FERDINAND LASSALLE.

Translated (with an Introduction) by

EDWARD PETERS.

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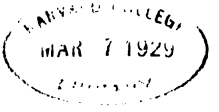

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NOTE.

Ferdinand Lassalle was born in the year 1825 at Breslau in Silesia, where his father carried on the business of a merchant, and intended that his son should follow the same occupation. But young Lassalle having early given proof of unusual ability, and a *"certain passionate energy of character," preferred a more ambitious career, and having passed with distinction through the Universities of Breslau and Berlin, devoted himself to the task of raising the condition of the people. Young, handsome, highly gifted, and thoroughly trained in the intellectual school of the highest German thought, he found a ready entrance to the best society of Berlin, and in Mendelssohn's house in particular gained the friendship of Humboldt and other eminent men. The poet Heine thus writes of him to Varnhagen von Euse—"My friend Lassalle, who is the bearer of this letter, is a young man of extraordinary ability. To the most thorough scholarship, the widest knowledge, the greatest penetration I have ever met with, and the greatest power of expression, he unites an energy of will, and a prudence in action, which fairly astonish me." He hints at one defect, however, with characteristic irony—"He is thoroughly stamped with the impress of these later times, which ignore the self-denial and modesty about which we of the older generation used, with more or less hypocrisy, perpetually to prate."

In 1848 Lassalle took a leading part in organising armed resistance to the reactionary Government, and when brought to trial, he undertook his own defence, and admitting the fact, maintained that he had done no more than his duty, and was acquitted by the jury. He now devoted himself anew to philosophy and literature. The first book that he published was entitled "The Philosophy of Heraclitus the Mystic of Ephesus," which was considered to be both a brilliant and a learned work. His tragedy "Franz von Sickingen" contains many passages of brilliant oratory, but was not found suitable for the stage. His brochure on "The Italian war

* *Wurzbach, Zeitgenossen*, to which I am mainly indebted for this sketch of Lassalle's life.—E.P

and the task of Prussia," met with a better reception, and soon reached a second edition. This was followed by "Fichte's Political Testament," and a work on Lessing. His "System of Inherited Rights" in two large volumes is said to be a work of great learning and power, but is not consistent with his later socialistic writings. Of the latter by far the most important is the treatise on "Capital and Labour." In this he states his object to be, to make the profits now absorbed by capital, available for the lower class of working men. The means to this end are to be national workshops, like those which failed in France, only the part which the State is to play is to be that of a sleeping partner, namely to provide the capital, to watch the conduct of the business, and to have the right of inspecting the books. He held this to be the only way to make the working class their own employers, and to evade the iron law which limits the working man's wages. At the same time he declared that "no social improvement would be worth the trouble of obtaining it if the working men (which happily is objectively impossible) were to remain after it what they are now." Education, and again education, is the constant refrain of his teaching.

In 1862 he delivered a series of addresses in Berlin which produced a stirring effect on the people, amongst them the *Arbeiter Programm* for which, strange as it may appear to the readers of this translation, he was punished by a short term of imprisonment. In the following year the "General Union of the working men of Germany" was formed at his instance, of which he was made President, and thus became the acknowledged leader of the "People's Party." Bismarck had three interviews with him, and tried to obtain the help of this party in his struggle with the so-called Party of Progress—but in vain. Equally in vain Lassalle urged the Chancellor to try the weapon of universal and equal suffrage against the common enemy the bourgeoisie. Bismarck, it appeared, had carefully studied Lassalle's writings, and there can be little doubt that what are called the Socialistic schemes of the Chancellor owe their origin, in part at least, to this source. Nor can we doubt the great influence of Lassalle on German thought in general. This is the work he had to do in the world, and it may yet bear fruit in a not very distant future. His further career was cut off by his untimely death in a duel in 1864.

E. PETERS.

THE WORKING MAN'S PROGRAMME.

GENTLEMEN,

Having been asked to give you a lecture, I thought that I should best meet your wishes by choosing a theme which from its very nature must be deeply interesting to you, and by treating it in the most thoroughly scientific manner. I will therefore speak on the special connexion that exists between the character of the present period of history in which we are living and the idea of the working class. I have said that my treatment of the subject should be purely scientific.

But scientific treatment consists in nothing else than complete clearness, and therefore a complete absence of presuppositions, that is to say, of reasoning founded on unwarranted assumptions.

On account of this entire absence of presuppositions with which we have to approach our subject, it will be necessary at starting to have a clear understanding of what we mean by a working man, or by the working class. For on this point we dare not allow ourselves the benefit of a presupposition, as if this were something perfectly well known. This is far from being the case. The language of common life, on the contrary, frequently attaches different meanings at different times to the

words working man and working class, and we must therefore at the proper time get a clear understanding as to the sense in which we intend to use these words. This however is not the right time. We must on the contrary begin this lecture with another question.

Namely with the following question. The working class is only one of the many classes of which the community of citizens consists. Moreover working men have existed at all times. How is it then possible, and what meaning can be attached to the statement, that a special connexion exists between the idea of this specified single class, and the principle of the particular period of history in which we live?

In order to understand this, it is requisite, gentlemen, to throw a glance at history, at the past, which rightly understood, here as always, explains the present and foreshows the outline of the future. We must make this retrospect as brief, gentlemen, as possible, for we shall otherwise run a risk of not reaching at all in the short time allotted to us the real subject which we have met to consider. But even in the face of this danger, we must take some such retrospective view of the past, however cursory and confined to the most general features, in order to understand the meaning of our question and of our theme.

If then we go back to the Middle Ages, we find that even at that time the same grades and classes of the population were in existence, though certainly far less developed than those of which the community of citizens consists at the present day. But we find further that one grade and one element was at that time the dominating one—namely the landed interest.

It is the landed interest, gentlemen, which in all respects bore sway in the Middle Ages, which impressed its own specific stamp on all the arrangements and on the whole life of that time; it is that which must be proclaimed as the ruling principle of that period.

The reason of this, namely that the landed interest was the ruling principle of that age, is a very simple one. It lies—at least this reason may for the present fully satisfy us—in the domestic and economic constitution of the Middle Ages; in the conditions of production at that period. Trade was at that time very slightly developed, and industry still less so. The staple of the wealth of the community consisted to an immensely preponderating degree in the produce of agriculture.

Movable possessions were at that time but little thought of in comparison with possession of the land and the soil, and you may plainly see to what an extent this was the case by the law of property, which always throws a clear light on the economic condition of the periods in which it was instituted. Thus for instance the law of property of the Middle Ages, with the object of preserving family property from generation to generation, and protecting it against dissipation, declares family property or "Estate" to be inalienable without the consent of the heirs. But by this family property or "Estate" is understood by express limitation only *landed property*. Chattels (fahrniss), on the contrary, as movable property was then called, were alienable without the consent of the heirs. And, in general, all personal or movable property was treated by the old German laws, not as an independent reproductive pro-

perty, or in short as *capital*, but only as the *produce* of the land and the soil, like the crops which are annually gathered from it, and it was put on a par with these. *Landed property* alone was regularly treated, at that time, as independent productive property. It was therefore only in complete accordance with this state of things, and a simple consequence of it, that the *landed interest* and those who had it almost exclusively in their hands, that is, as you are aware, the nobles and the clergy, formed the ruling factor of that society in all respects.

To whatever institutions of the middle ages we turn our eyes, *this* phenomenon is everywhere apparent in them.

We will content ourselves with a hasty glance at some of the most important of those arrangements, in which the land interest comes forth as the ruling principle.

First then let us look at the organisation of the *public forces*, or the *feudal system*. You know, gentlemen, that this was so constituted that the king, princes, and lords ceded to other lords and knights certain lands for their use, in consideration of which the recipients were obliged solemnly to undertake the obligation of service in the field, that is to say, of supporting their feudal lords in their wars or quarrels, both in person and with their dependents.

Let us next look at the organisation of the *public Rights*, or the *constitution of the realm*. In the assembly of the German States the princely class and the great landed interest were represented by the Counts of the Empire and the clergy. The towns only enjoyed a

seat and a vote in that assembly if they had acquired the privileges of a free town of the Empire.

To proceed, thirdly, to the exemption of the great landed proprietors from taxation. Now it is a characteristic and an ever recurring phenomenon, gentlemen, that every ruling *privileged* class invariably seeks to throw the burden of maintaining the existence of the State on the oppressed classes which have no property; and they do this openly or covertly, either directly or indirectly. When Richelieu in the year 1641 demanded six millions of francs from the clergy, as an extraordinary tax to help the necessities of the State, the clergy, through the mouth of the Archbishop of Sens, gave this characteristic answer—"The ancient usage of the Church during its vigour was that the people contributed its goods, the nobility its blood, the clergy its prayers to the necessities of the State."

Fourthly, we may mention the contempt with which every other kind of labour than that which was occupied with the land was socially regarded. To engage in industrial undertakings, to gain money by a trade or profession, was considered disgraceful, and dishonouring to the two privileged ruling classes, the nobles and the clergy, for whom it was only deemed honourable to derive their income from the possession of land.

These four great and important facts, which determine the fundamental character of any epoch, are amply sufficient for our purpose, and show how it was that the *possession of land* everywhere fixed its impress on the period of which we are treating, and formed its ruling principle.

So much was this the case that even the movement of the *Peasants' War* which broke out in Germany in 1524, and spread all over Swabia, Franconia, Alsace, Westphalia, and other parts of Germany, and was in appearance thoroughly *revolutionary*, nevertheless was essentially dependent on this same principle, was in fact therefore a *reactionary* movement, in spite of its revolutionary mode of action. You are aware, gentlemen, that the peasants at that time burnt down the castles of the nobles, put the nobles themselves to death, made them run the gauntlet through their spears, which was the cruel practice in vogue at that time. And notwithstanding, in spite of this external revolutionary varnish, the movement was essentially and throughout reactionary.

For the new birth of the relations of the State, the *German freedom*, which the peasants wished to establish, was to consist according to them in this, that the peculiar and privileged intermediate position which the princes had assumed between the Emperor and the States should be done away with, and that nothing should be represented in the German Diet, excepting the free and independent possession of the land, especially of the land held by the peasant class and by the knights—neither of which had been hitherto represented—as well as that of the nobles of every degree, namely of the Knights, Counts and then existing Princes, without regard to the difference that had formerly been made between them. The representation therefore was to be confined to the landed possessions of the *nobles* on the one side and those of the *peasants* on the other.

You see at once then, gentlemen, that this plan ultimately proceeds simply on a perfectly consistent and more regular carrying out of this principle, which the epoch just then drawing near its close had taken as its foundation—I say on a logically consistent, more complete and regular carrying out of the principle that the possession of land should be the ruling element, which alone should entitle any one to a participation in the management of the State. That any one could demand such participation on the ground that he was a *man*, that he was a *reasonable being*, without the possession of any land,—of that the peasants had not the most distant idea! The times were not yet ripe for this, the thoughts of men not yet become sufficiently revolutionary.

Thus, then, this movement of the peasantry, which proceeded with such revolutionary determination, was in its essence thoroughly *reactionary:* that is to say, instead of resting on a new revolutionary principle, it rested unconsciously on the old established principle of the period which was at that very time *dying out:* and it was precisely for this reason, because it was in fact *reactionary*, while it believed itself to be revolutionary, that the peasant movement was unsuccessful.

In opposition both to the rising of the peasants and that of the nobles (under Franz von Sickingen), both of which had *in common* the principle that participation in the management of the State should depend, even more strictly than had hitherto been the case, on the possession of the land, the sovereign authority of the Princes, founded on the idea of a State sovereignty

independent of landed possessions, which was making head at that time, was a relatively justifiable and revolutionary force. This it was which gave it the power which led to its victorious development, and to the suppression both of the movement of the peasants and that of the nobles.

I have dwelt with some emphasis on this point, gentlemen,—first, in order to prove to you the reasonableness and the progress of freedom, in the development of history, and that by an example from which it is by no means obvious on a superficial survey; secondly, because historians are far from having recognised this reactionary character of the rising of the peasants, and the true cause of its failure which was solely dependent upon that character, but on the contrary, deceived by external appearances, hold the peasant war to have been a truly revolutionary movement.

Thirdly, I have dwelt upon it because this spectacle is constantly repeating itself in all ages, that men who do not think clearly—and to this class, gentlemen, those who are apparently most learned, and even professors may belong, and, as the Church of St. Paul with its sad memorials has shewn us, do extremely often belong—fall into the extraordinary illusion of holding that which is only a more consistent and complete expression of a period of history and an organisation of society *even then passing away*, to be a *new revolutionary* principle.

Against such men and such courses, which are revolutionary only in the *imagination* of these men—for there will be plenty of them in the future as there

have been in the past—permit me, gentlemen, to put you on your guard.

We may be allowed to feel confident on these grounds that the numerous movements which have been immediately, or within a short time, after momentary successes, suppressed, which we find in history, and which may fill many well meaning friends of the people who take a superficial view of things with sad misgivings, have ever been revolutionary movements only in the *imagination* of their promoters.

A *truly* revolutionary movement, one which is founded on a really new principle of thought, has *never* failed, at least in the long run, as any one who thinks deeply may, to his comfort, prove to himself from history.

I now resume the thread of my argument.

As the Peasants' War was revolutionary only in their imagination, so on the other hand the progress of industry, the productive energy of the towns, the constantly developing division of labour, and the *wealth of capital*, which came into existence by these means, and which accumulated exclusively in the hands of the bourgeoisie (because they were the only class which engaged in production, and appropriated its advantages to themselves)—these were the really and truly revolutionary forces of that time.

The close of the Middle Ages, and the commencement of modern history, is usually dated from the Reformation, *i.e.* from the year 1517.

And in fact this is correct, in the sense that in the two centuries which immediately followed the Reformation, a change was slowly, gradually, and imperceptibly

taking place, which completely transformed the aspect of society, and brought about in the heart of it a revolution, which was only proclaimed, but not really created by what is called the French Revolution in the year 1789.

Do you ask in what this revolution consisted?

Nothing had been changed in the *legal* position of the nobles. *By law* the nobles and the clergy were the two ruling classes, the Bourgeoisie remained everywhere the neglected and oppressed class. But if nothing had been changed *de jure*, yet *de facto* the change that had actually taken place in the relations of these classes was all the more extraordinary.

Through the creation and accumulation of capital, that is to say of moveable in opposition to landed property, in the hands of the Bourgeoisie, the nobles had sunk into complete insignificance; nay, often into real *dependence* on this Bourgeoisie which had become rich. Already they were obliged, if they wished to be somewhat on a par with them, to abandon all the principles of their class, and to begin to make use of the same means of obtaining money through industry, to which the Bourgeoisie owed their wealth and therefore their actual power.

The Comedies of Molière, who lived in the time of Louis XIV., show us as early as that date a highly interesting phenomenon, the noble of that day despising the rich citizen, and at the same time playing the parasite at his table.

We see Louis XIV. himself, that proudest of kings, doffing his hat, and humbling himself in his palace of

Versailles before the Jew Samuel Bernard, the Rothschild of that day, in order to induce him to grant a loan.

When Law, the famous Scotch financier, had formed the trading company or joint-stock enterprise which had combined for the commercial exploration of the banks of the Mississippi, Louisiana, the East Indies, &c., the Regent of France himself was one of the Directors—a member of a company of merchants! Yes, the Regent found himself compelled in August 1717, to issue an edict, in which it was ordained that the nobles might enter the naval and military service of this trading company without any degradation to their dignity! To that pass, then, had the proud and warlike feudal nobility of France arrived, that they could become the armed commissaries of the industrial commercial undertakings of the Bourgeoisie who were carrying on their trade in every part of the world at once.

In connexion with this change of opinion, a kind of *materialism* had at that time already developed itself, and a voracious and greedy struggling for money and property, to which all moral ideas, nay what unhappily appeals in general still more strongly to the privileged classes, all class privileges, were prostituted. Under the same Regent of France, Count Horn, one of the most distinguished nobles connected with the first families of France, nay with the Regent himself, was broken on the wheel as a common highway robber; and the Duchess of Orleans, a German Princess, writes in a letter of the 29th November 1719, that six of the

most distinguished of the Court ladies had one day waylaid the aforesaid Law (who at that time was the most courted and also the busiest man in France, and whom consequently it was very difficult to lay hold of) in the court of some building, in order to induce him to give them some shares in a company he had established, after which all France was running at that time, and whose value on the Exchange was six or eight times as high as the nominal price at which they had been issued by Law. The pressure exercised by these ladies with this object proceeded to a degree which a regard to decency will not allow me to particularise.

If you ask me again what causes had rendered possible this development of industry, and of the wealth of the Bourgeoisie thereby called into existence, I could not give a complete answer to the question without largely overstepping the limits of the time allotted to me. I will therefore only briefly enumerate the most essential of these causes; namely, the discovery of America and the enormous impulse thereby exercised on production; the discovery of the sea route to the East Indies by doubling the Cape of Good Hope, whereas formerly all trade with India and the East was forced to take the overland route by Suez; the discovery of the magnetic needle and the compass, and the greater security thus given to all trade by sea, as well as greater speed and diminution of the cost of insurance; the canals and paved roads constructed in the interior of countries, which, by diminishing the cost of transport, first made it possible to sell at a distance

numerous commodities which formerly were not worth the expense of carriage; the greater security of the property of the citizens; the regular course of justice; the invention of gunpowder, and the breaking up of the feudal power of the nobles by the kings in consequence of this invention; the dismissal of the spearmen and men at arms of the nobles, in consequence of the destruction of their castles and of their independent military power, nothing being now left for these dependents but to seek admission to the workshops of that time—*all* these events helped to drag on the triumphal car of the Bourgeoisie!

All these events and many others which could be enumerated are comprised however in *one* consequence —the opening of great outlets, that is of extensive regions where goods can be sold, and the accompanying diminution of the cost of production and transport leads to production in vast quantities, production for the market of the world, and this in turn creates the necessity of *cheap* production, which again can only be satisfied by an ever-advancing division of labour, that is by a separation of employment into its simplest mechanical operations, ever carried further and further, and thus again calls forth a production on an ever increasing scale.

We have thus arrived, gentlemen, at the domain of reciprocal cause and effect. Each of these facts calls the other into existence, and the latter again reacts upon the former, and widens and enlarges its area.

Accordingly you will clearly perceive that, the production of an article in enormous quantities, its pro-

duction for the market of the world, is, speaking generally, easily accomplished only on the condition that the cost of the production of this article shall be *moderate*, and also the *transport* of it cheap enough not to raise its price exorbitantly. For production in vast quantities requires an enormous sale; and the extensive sale of any kind of produce is only rendered possible by its cheapness, which makes it accessible to a large number of purchasers. Cheapness of production and transport therefore cause the production of wares of any kind to take place on a large scale. But conversely, you will at once see that it is the production of an article in large quantities which causes and increases cheapness. A manufacturer for instance who sells two hundred thousand pieces of cotton in the year, is enabled by purchasing his raw materials cheaper on so large a scale, and also because the profits on his capital and the expense of his plant and machinery are divided between so large a number of pieces, he is enabled, I say, within certain limits, to sell each piece much cheaper than a manufacturer who only produces five thousand such pieces every year. The greater cheapness of production leads therefore to production in larger quantities, and this leads again to still greater cheapness, which calls forth again a still larger production, which once more causes further cheapness, and so on.

Precisely the same thing happens with regard to the *division of labour*, which on its side again is the necessary condition of extensive production and of cheapness, for without it neither cheapness nor production on an extensive scale would be possible.

The division of labour which separates the process of production into a great number of very simple and often purely mechanical operations requiring no exercise of reason, and which causes separate workmen to be employed for each one of these divided operations, would be quite impossible without an extensive production of the articles in question; and is therefore only called into existence and developed by such extensive demand. Conversely this separation of labour into such simple operations and manipulations, leads further (1) to an ever increasing cheapness, (2) consequently to production on a greater and more gigantic scale, ever spreading beyond this and that market till it reaches the whole *market of the world*, and (3) by this means, and through the new divisions which this extension renders possible in the single operations of labour, to an ever increasing advance in the division of labour itself.

Through this series of reciprocal operations of cause and effect, an entire change took place in the work of the community, and consequently in all the relations of life of the community itself.

A brief view of the nature of this revolution may be obtained by reducing it to the following contrasts.

In the earlier part of the Middle Ages, as only a very small number of costly products could bear the enhanced price which would have been caused by their transport, articles were only produced to supply the needs of the locality in which the producers lived. This implied a very limited market comprising only their immediate neighbourhood, the requirements of which were for this very reason well known, fixed, and uniform. The re-

quirements or the demand *preceded* the offer of the goods and formed the *well known guide* to the amount of goods offered for sale. Or in other words—the production of the community was carried on mainly by *handicrafts*. For this is the character of business carried on in a small way or by handicrafts, as distinguished from that which is carried on in factories or on a large scale, that either the demand is waited for, before the article is produced; as for instance the tailor waits for my order before he makes me a coat, the locksmith before he makes me a lock; or that at least if many articles are manufactured beforehand, this production in advance is limited to the minimum of the requirements of the locality and its immediate neighbourhood, which are accurately known by experience. For instance, a tinman makes a certain number of lamps in advance, which he knows will be soon absorbed by the requirements of the town.

The characteristic quality, gentlemen, of a community which produces mainly in this manner, is poverty, or at least only a moderate degree of prosperity, and on the other hand a certain stability and fixedness of all relations.

But now, through the incessant reciprocal action which I have described to you, the work of the community, and consequently all the relations of life gradually assumed a totally opposite character. This was in germ the same character which distinguishes the work of the community *to-day*, though truly in a very different, in fact in an immensely developed degree. In the gigantic development which has now been attained this character may be thus indicated in opposition to the

earlier one which has been described: whereas formerly the demand preceded the offer of the merchandise, and the production of it, and drew this latter in its train, and determined it, formed its guide and its *well known* measure, now on the contrary the production, the offer of the goods precedes the demand, and seeks to *force* it into existence. Goods are no longer produced for the locality, for the ascertained needs of neighbouring markets, but for the markets of the world. They are produced on the largest scale and for every part of the world in general, to supply a need entirely unknown and not to be measured, and the produce is able to force the demand for it into being, provided that a single weapon is given to it, namely *cheapness*. Cheapness is the weapon of production, with which on the one hand it *conquers* the purchaser, and on the other hand drives all other goods of the same kind out of the market, which may be likewise pressed upon the purchaser, so that in fact under the system of free competition, every producer may hope, however great the quantity of goods he produces, to find a market for all these if he is only able by the better arming of his wares with cheapness to make the wares of his competitors unable to maintain the contest.

The prevailing character of such a community is vast, immeasurable wealth, on the other hand a great mobility of all relations, an almost constant, anxious insecurity in the position of individuals and a very unequal apportionment of the proceeds of production amongst those who work together to secure them.

You see then, gentlemen, how vast was the change which the quiet, revolutionary, and undermining activity

of industry, had imperceptibly wrought in the structure of the community before the end of that century.

Although the actors in the Peasants War had not yet ventured so much as to take up any other *idea* than that of founding the State on the *possession of land*, although they had not been able even in thought to free themselves from the view that the possession of land was necessarily the element that involved dominion over the State, and a participation in this possession the condition of a participation in this dominion, yet before the end of this century, the quiet, unnoticed, revolutionary advance of industry had brought it to pass, that the possession of land had been completely stripped of its former importance, and in presence of the development of the new means of production, of the wealth which this development fostered and daily increased, and of the immense influence which it exercised thereby on the whole population, and on its relations, as well as upon the nobility itself, which had to a great extent become poor, had sunk to a subordinate position.

The revolution had therefore already entered into the vitals of the community, into their *actual* relations, long before it broke out in France, and it was only requisite to bring the change thus wrought to *external recognition*, in order to give it a *moral* sanction.

This, gentlemen, is always the case in *all revolutions*. A revolution can never be *made*; all that can ever be done is to add external *moral recognition* to a revolution which has already entered into the actual relations of a community, aud to *carry it out accordingly*.

To set about to *make* a revolution is the folly of im-

mature minds which have no notion of the laws of history.

And it is for this reason equally foolish and childish to attempt to repress a revolution which has once developed itself in the womb of a community, and to oppose its moral recognition, or to utter against such a community, or the individuals who assist at its birth, the reproach that they are revolutionary. If the revolution has already found its way into the community, into its actual relations, then there is no help for it, it must come out and take its place in the constitution of the community.

How this comes about, and how far it had already happened in the period of which I am speaking, you will best see by one fact which I will relate to you.

I have already spoken to you of the division of labour, the development of which consists in separating all the processes of production, into a series of very simple and mechanical operations, requiring no exercise of reason.

Now as this division is ever advancing further and further, it is at last discovered that these single operations, as they are so simple and require no exercise of reason, can be just as well and even better performed by unreasoning agents; and accordingly in the year 1775, that is fourteen years before the French Revolution, Arkwright invented in England, the first machine, his famous spinning jenny.

I am not going to say that this machine produced the French Revolution. The invention preceded it by far too short a time for this, and besides had not yet been

introduced into France; but it may truly be said that it represented in itself, in a material form, the revolution which had already actually entered into the community, and was already developed there. This was itself, so to speak, the revolution which had become a living force.

The reason of this is very simple. You will have heard of the formation of the Guilds, through which production was carried on in the Middle Ages.

I cannot here go into the history of the Guilds of the Middle Ages, nor trace that of the free competition which at the time of the French Revolution had everywhere taken the place of the Guilds. I can only state the fact in the form of an asseveration, that the system of Guilds of the Middle Ages was inseparable from the other social arrangements of that period. But if time does not allow me to lay before you clearly the reasons of this inseparable connection, yet the fact itself admits of an easy historical proof. The Guilds lasted through the whole of the Middle Ages, and until the French Revolution. As early as the year 1672 their abrogation was discussed in a German Diet—but in vain, nay, in the year 1614 the Bourgeoisie demanded of the Estates General, that is to say the French Parliament, the abolition of the Guilds which already cramped them in all their manufactures. This was likewise in vain. Nay further, thirteen years before the Revolution, in the year 1776, a reforming minister in France, the famous Turgot, did abolish Guilds. But the feudal privileged world of the Middle Ages regarded itself, and it was perfectly right, in danger of death, if privilege, its principle of life,

ceased to penetrate every class of society; and so the king was prevailed upon, six months after the abolition of the Guilds, to withdraw his edict, and restore them. In due time came the Revolution, and destroyed in one day by the storming of the Bastille that for which Germany had striven in vain since 1672, and France since 1614, that is for near *two centuries*, to do away with by legal means.

You will perceive from this, gentlemen, that however great are the advantages which attend reforms conducted by legal methods, yet they have on all the most important occasions, the one great drawback of an impotence lasting for entire centuries, and on the other hand, that the revolutionary method, terrible as are the drawbacks with which it also is accompanied, has in spite of them the one advantage of attaining speedily and energetically a practical result.

Now fix your eyes, gentlemen, with me for a moment on the fact that the Guilds were inseparably connected with the whole of the social arrangements of the Middle Ages, and you will see at once how the first machine, the spinning jenny which Arkwright invented, contained already in itself a complete revolutionising of those social conditions.

For how could production by means of machinery be possible under the system of Guilds, by which the number of men and apprentices which a master might keep was fixed by law in every locality? Again under this system of Guilds, the different branches of industry were marked off from one another in the most exact manner by law, and each master was only allowed to

undertake one of them, so that for example, for hundreds of years the tailors who made clothes were engaged in lawsuits with the tailors who mended them, the makers of nails, with the locksmiths, in order to fix the limits which separated their trades. Now under such a system of Guilds how could production be carried on by machinery for which it was necessary that different kinds of labour should be combined in the hand of one and the same capitalist?

A stage had thus been reached, at which production itself, by its steadily advancing development, had brought into existence instruments of production which were destined to shatter the whole existing system of society; instruments of production and methods of production, which could find no place or room for development in that system.

In this sense I say that the first machine was already in itself a Revolution, for it bore in its cogs and wheels, little as this could be seen from its outward appearance, the germ of the whole of the new conditions of society, founded upon free competition, which were to be developed with the vigour and necessity of a living force.

And in the same way it is possible, gentlemen, unless I am greatly mistaken, that many phenomena which are to be seen at the present day, contain in themselves a new condition of things, which they must of necessity develope. This is entirely overlooked in judging of these phenomena from the outside only, so that even the Goverment passes over them without suspicion, while prosecuting insignificant agitators, nay even con-

siders them as necessary accompaniments of our culture, greets them as the flower and outcome of it, and occasionally makes speeches recognising and approving them.

After all this discussion, gentlemen, you will now clearly comprehend the true significance of the famous pamphlet which was published in 1788 the year before the French Revolution by the Abbé Siéyes, and which is summed up in these words, "What is the third Estate? Nothing! What ought it to be? Everything!"

The Bourgeoisie was called the third Estate in France, because they formed the third class, in contra-distinction to the two privileged classes, the nobility and the clergy, and thus included the whole of the nonprivileged population.

Siéyes then thus formulated these two questions and answers. But their true significance, as follows from what I have already said, might be expressed more strikingly and correctly as follows—

"What is the third Estate actually and in fact? Everything!

But what is it legally or constitutionally? Nothing!"

The point is, therefore, to make the *legal* position of the third class, *identical* with its *actual* position; to obtain *legal* sanction and recognition for its actual and existing significance,—and this is precisely the work and the significance of the victorious Revolution which broke out in France in 1789, and of the transforming influence which it exercised over the other countries of Europe.

I am not going, gentlemen, to enter upon the history of the French Revolution. We can now only glance, and that in the most brief and cursory manner, which is all

that our time will allow, at the most important and decisive points in the transition from one stage of society to another.

It is necessary here then to ask the question, who constituted this third class, or the Bourgeoisie, who by means of the French Revolution conquered the privileged classes, and obtained the government of the State?

As this class stood over against the legally privileged classes of the community, so it understood itself at that time, at the first moment, to be identified with the whole people, and *its* interests to be identical with the interests of the *whole of humanity*. To this was owing the elevating and mighty enthusiasm which prevailed at that period. The *rights of man* were proclaimed, and it appeared as if with the freedom and the rule of the third Estate, all legal privileges had disappeared from the community, and all differences founded upon them had been swallowed up and absorbed in the one idea of the freedom of man.

In the very beginning of the movement, in April 1789, on the occasion of the elections to the chambers which were convened by the king on the understanding that the third class should this time send as many representatives as the nobles and the clergy together, we find a journal by no means revolutionary in character, writing as follows—"Who can say whether the despotism of the Bourgeoisie will not succeed to the pretended aristocracy of the nobles?"

But cries of this kind were at that time drowned in the general enthusiasm.

Nevertheless we must return to that question; we

must put the question distinctly. — Were the interest of the third class truly the interests of the *whole of humanity*, or did this *third* class, the Bourgeoisie, carry in its bosom yet another, a *fourth* class, from which it desired to separate itself by law, and so to subject it to its dominion?

It is now time, gentlemen, that in order to avoid the danger of being exposed to gross misinterpretation, I should explain clearly the meaning of the word Bourgeoisie or upper Bourgeoisie, as the designation of a *political party*, and the sense in which I use the word Bourgeoisie.

In the German language the word Bourgeoisie is usually translated by the burgher or citizen class. But I do not use it in this sense; we are *all citizens*, the working man, the poor citizen [Kleinbürger] the rich citizen [Grossbürger] and so forth. The word Bourgeoisie has on the contrary in the course of history acquired a very *special political significance* which I will now immediately explain to you.

The whole burgher or not noble class, when the French Revolution occurred, divided itself, and still remains divided, speaking generally, into *two* subdivisions, namely in the first place, the class whose members either entirely or mainly derive their income from their labour, and who have either no capital, or a very modest one to assist them in exercising a productive industry for the support of themselves and their families. To this class belong therefore the working men, the lower grade of citizens, handicraftsmen, and generally speaking the peasants. The second class consists of those who

dispose of large private property, of a *large capital*, and by reason of such a basis of capital, engage in production, or draw an income in the shape of rents. These may be called the *rich citizens*. But a rich citizen, gentlemen, is for that reason essentially no Bourgeois at all.

If a nobleman seated in his room, finds pleasure in the contemplation of his ancestors, and of his landed property, no citizen has any thing to say against it. But if this nobleman desires to make his ancestry or his landed property the condition of a special rank and privilege in the State, the condition of the power of directing the will of the State,—then the indignation of the citizen is roused against the noble, and he calls him a *feudalist*.

The same thing exactly takes place with regard to the difference of property within the citizen class.

That the rich citizen seated in his chamber should find pleasure in contemplating the great convenience and advantage which a large private property brings to its possessor, nothing is more simple, nothing more natural and legitimate than this.

The working man, and the poor citizen, in a word, the whole of that class which is without capital, is fully justified in demanding from the State that it should direct its aim and all its endeavours towards the improvement of the sorrowful and needy condition of the working classes, and to the discovery of the means by which it may help to raise those by whose hands all the riches with which our civilization delights to adorn itself have been produced. To the same hands all those products owe their existence, without which the whole community would perish in a single day; it is,

therefore the duty of the State to help these to a more ample and assured wage, and so again to the possibility of a rational education, and through this to an existence truly worthy of man. Fully as the working classes are justified in demanding this from the State, and in pointing out this as its true *aim*, so on the other hand, the working man must and will never forget that the right to all property once lawfully earned is thoroughly legitimate and unassailable.

But if the rich citizen, not contented with the *actual* advantages of large possessions, desires to make the *property of the citizen*, or his *capital*, the condition of power over the State, and of participating in the direction of the will of the State and the determination of its aims, *then* the rich citizen becomes a bourgeois, *then* he makes the fact of possession a *legal* condition of political power, *then* he characterises himself as belonging to a *new privileged* class of the people, which now desires to impress the overruling stamp of *its* privilege on all the arrangements of society, *just as* the noble did in the Middle Ages, as we have seen, with the privilege of the *possession of land*.

The question then which we have to raise with regard to the French Revolution, and the period of history inaugurated by it, is this,—Has the third class which came into power through the French Revolution, regarded itself as a Bourgeoisie in this sense, and attempted successfully to subject the people to its privileged political domination?

The answer must be sought in the great facts of history, and this answer is *distinctly* in the affirmative.

We can only cast a rapid glance at the most important of these facts, which, however, are amply sufficient to decide the question.

In the very first decree issued in consequence of the French Revolution, namely, that of the 3rd of September 1791 (Chapter I. sections 1 and 2), the difference between active and passive citizens is set forth. Only the active citizens are entitled to the franchise, and an active citizen, according to this decree, is only one who pays *direct taxes* to a certain amount, which is afterwards more precisely stated.

The amount of this taxation was fixed with considerable moderation; it was to be only the value of three days' work, or if we estimate a days' work at the value of 10 silver groschen it would amount to a thaler (three shillings). But what was far more important was this, that all who served for wages were declared to be *not active* citizens, by which definition the working class was expressly excluded from the right of election. But after all in such questions as these it is not the *amount* which is of importance but the *principle*.

A *census* was introduced, that is to say a specified amount of *private property* was, by means of the franchise—this first and most important of all political rights—made the condition of participation in the direction of the will of the State, and the determination of its object.

All those who paid no direct taxes at all, or a less amount than the above, or who *worked for wages*, were excluded from exercising power over the State, and reduced to an inferior subject class. *Private property*

or the *possession of capital* had become the condition of sovereignty over the State, as *nobility* or *landed property* had been in the Middle Ages.

This principle of the census remains the leading principle of all the constitutions which resulted from the French Revolution. The only exception was a short period during which the French Republic of 1793 lasted, which perished on account of its own want of definiteness, and of the entire condition of society at that time, and on which I cannot enter here more particularly.

Yes, following the rule which is common to all principles, it was a necessary consequence that the amount first fixed should soon develope itself into a much larger one.

In the decree of 1814, 300 francs or 80 thalers, instead of the former amount of three days labour, was fixed as the qualification of the franchise by the charter granted by Louis XVIII. The Revolution of 1830 broke out, and nevertheless, the law of the 19th of April 1831 enacts that a payment of direct taxes to the amount of 200 francs or about 53 thalers, shall be the qualification of the franchise.

That which was called, under Louis Phillipe and Guizot, the "*pays légal*," the country recognised by law, consisted of 200,000 men. There were no more than 200,000 electors in France qualified by the amount of their private property, and these bore rule over a country of thirty millions of inhabitants.

We must here observe that it is obviously a matter of indifference, whether the principle of the census, the exclusion of those who have no property from the

franchise, is applied by the law in a *direct* and *open*, or in some covert manner. The effect is always the same.

Thus the second French Republic in the year 1850 could not possibly recall openly the universal and direct right to the suffrage which had been once declared, and which we shall consider presently in its operation. But they partially effected their object by excluding from the franchise, by the law of 31st May, 1850, all citizens who had not been domiciled for at least three years without intermission in the same place. For, as workmen in France are often forced by their circumstances to change their abode, and to seek for employment in another commune, they hoped, and with good reason, to exclude from the suffrage a very considerable number of working men, who would be unable to prove a continuous residence of three years in the same place.

We have here, then, a Census in a disguised form.

Much worse, however, do we fare in Prussia since the passing of the electoral law, which divided electors into three classes. By this law, according to the circumstances of different localities, three, ten, or thirty or more electors of the third class who have no property, exercise only the same voting power as a single large capitalist, a rich burgher who belongs to the first electoral class. Consequently, in point of fact, if the proportional numbers were on an average, for instance, as one to ten, nine men in every ten of those who in the year 1848 possessed the franchise, have lost it through this electoral law which formed part of the charter of the year 1849, and now exercise it only in appearance.

But in order to show you how this law now actually works on an average, it is only necessary to exhibit to you some figures which are drawn from the official lists published by the Government.

In the year 1848 we had in consequence of the right of universal suffrage then introduced, 3,661,993 original electors.

By the electoral law of 30th May, 1849, with its three classes, the number of electors was in the first place reduced to 3,255,703 by depriving of the suffrage all who had no fixed abode, or who received public alms. Thus 406,000 men were at once deprived of the franchise. This however was the smallest part of the evil.

The remaining 3,255,000 electors were now to be divided, according to the electoral laws, into three classes, and according to the official lists prepared by the direction of the chartered electoral law of 1849—

153,808 men belonged to the 1st class
409,945 ,, ,, 2nd class
2,691,950 ,, ,, 3rd class

Now let us leave the second class out of view, and compare only the first and the third, the rich burghers and those who possessed no property, with one another, and we find that 153,800 rich men exercised the same voting power as 2,691,950 who belonged to the class of workmen, small citizens, and peasants; that is to say, *one* rich man exercised the same right of voting as *seventeen* who had no property. And now if we take as our basis the fact, that in the year 1848 universal suffrage was decreed by the law of the 8th April, so that

at that time 153,800 working men or small citizens were of equal weight at the elections with 153,800 rich men, and consequently one man without property was of equal weight with *one* rich man, it is clear that now, when it takes *seventeen* poor men to counterbalance the vote of one rich man, sixteen working men and small citizens out of seventeen have had their legal right of voting wrested from them.

But even this, gentlemen, bad as it is, is only the *average* effect. In practice the matter assumes, in consequence of the varying circumstances of different localities, a very different and far more unfavourable aspect; and most unfavourable of all where the inequalities of property are the greatest. Thus the district of Düsseldorf has 6356 electors of the first class and 166,300 of the third class; twenty-six electors of the third class therefore exercise in that place the same voting power as one rich man.

To return from this digression to our main line of argument. We have shown, and have yet to adduce further proofs, that since the Bourgeoisie attained to power through the French Revolution, it has made *its own* element, private property, the ruling principle of all the arrangements of society; that the Bourgeoisie, behaving precisely as the nobles did in the middle ages with regard to *landed property*, now affix the predominant and exclusive impress of *its* peculiar principle, private property or capital, the impress of *its* privilege, upon all the arrangements of society. The parallel between the nobility and the Bourgeoisie is in this respect complete.

In relation to the most important and fundamental point, the composition of the State, we have already seen this. As, in the middle ages, the possession of land was the ruling principle of the representation in the German Parliament, so now by means of the direct or the disguised census, the payment of taxes, and consequently, as this is conditioned by the capital which a man possesses, the *possession of capital*, is ultimately that which determines the right of election to the Chambers, and consequently the participation in power over the State.

And so with regard to all the other arrangements in which I have proved to you that the landed interest was the ruling principle in the Middle Ages.

I have drawn your attention to the *freedom from taxation* of the nobles who then possessed the land; and I told you that every dominant *privileged* class endeavours to shift the burden of supporting the expenses of the State on the oppressed classes who have no property.

The Bourgeoisie have done precisely the same. It is true they cannot openly declare that they intend to be free of taxation. The principle that they express is on the contrary that every one should pay taxes according to his income. But they attain to the same result in a *disguised* form, at least as far as it goes, by the distinction between direct and indirect taxes.

Direct taxes, gentlemen, are those which like the classified income tax, or the class taxes, are raised from income, and are therefore fixed according to the amount of the income and capital. Indirect taxes, on the other

hand, are those which are imposed on needs of some kind, for instance on salt, corn, beer, meat, fuel, or on the need of the protection provided by law, on the cost of litigation, stamps, &c. These are in most instances paid by the individual in the price of the article, without his knowing or observing that he is paying any tax when he pays for it, or that it is the *tax* which enhances the price he pays for the article.

Now you are aware, gentlemen, that one man who is twenty, fifty, or a hundred times as rich as another, by no means requires on that account, twenty, fifty, or a hundred times as much salt, bread or meat, nor drinks fifty or a hundred times as much beer or wine, nor requires fifty or a hundred times as much warmth, and therefore fuel, as a workman or poor citizen.

Hence it follows that all *indirect* taxes, instead of being adapted to individuals according to the proportion of their capital and income, are paid, in far the greater part, by the poorest and most destitute classes of the nation. It is true that the Bourgeoisie did not actually invent indirect taxation; it existed before. But the Bourgeoisie were the first to develop it in an unprecedented degree into a *system*, and laid upon it almost the whole burden of supplying the necessities of the State.

In order to show you this, I will glance by way of example at the revenue of Prussia for the year 1855.

The total amount received by the State in that year was in round numbers 108,930,000 thalers. From this we have to deduct 11,967,000 thalers the proceeds of the domains and forests, that is to say, income derived

from State property which we need not reckon here. There remain, therefore, about 97 millions of revenue from other sources. Of this revenue, according to the budget, about 26 millions were raised by *direct* taxation. But this is not true, and is only made to appear so because our budget is not constructed on scientific principles, but is only regulated by the manner in which the taxes are apparently collected. Out of these 26 millions, 10 millions of land tax ought to be deducted; for though they are certainly taken directly from the possessor of the land, yet they are again added by him to the price he demands for his corn; they are therefore actually paid by the consumer of the corn, and are really an indirect tax. For the same reason the tax on trades amounting to 2,900,000 thalers must be deducted.

There only remains as revenue *really* derived from direct taxation—

2,928,000	thalers	from classified income-tax.
7,884,000	,,	from class taxes.
2,036,000	,,	from surtax.
Total 12,848,000	thalers.	

Thus only 12,800,000 thalers, gentlemen, out of a revenue of 97 millions really proceed from direct taxation. All that is collected beyond this 12,800,000 thalers (for we must not follow the unscientific classification of the budget which does not reckon the proceeds of the salt monopoly, amounting to 8,300,000 thalers, nor 8,849,000 thalers received as a tax on litigation, as

indirect taxes), all this balance I say, with the exception of a few unimportant items of a special character, is altogether raised from sources of revenue which are of the nature of *indirect taxes*, that is to say they are raised by indirect taxation.

Indirect taxation is therefore, gentlemen, the institution by which the Bourgeoisie creates the privilege of freedom from taxation for great capitalists, and lays the cost of maintaining the existence of the State on the poorer classes of the community.

At the same time I beg you to observe, gentlemen, the remarkable contradiction, and strange justice involved in this proceeding of laying the whole burden of the expenses of the State on the *indirect taxes*, and so on the *poor* people, but making the *direct taxes* the criterion and condition of the right to the suffrage, that is to say of the right to political power; while these direct taxes contribute only the absurdly small proportion of 12 millions to the whole revenue of 108 millions!

Moreover, I told you, gentlemen, while speaking of the nobles of the Middle Ages, that they held in social contempt all the activity and industry of the burgher class.

Precisely the same thing occurs to day. It is true that *every* kind of labour is now held in high honour, and if a rag picker or a nightman became a millionaire, he might be certain of being received with high honour into society.

But with what social contempt are they greeted, no matter in what way or how hard they work, who have

no private property to back them. This is a fact which you have no need to learn from my lecture, but which, unhappily, you can verify often enough by your own daily experience.

Nay, in many respects the Bourgeoisie carries out more thoroughly and logically the dominion of its own peculiar element and privileges, than did the noble in the Middle Ages with respect to the landed interest.

The education of the people—I speak here of the education of adults—was in the Middle Ages left in the hands of the clergy. Since then the newspapers have undertaken this office. But owing to the *caution* money which the journals must deposit, and still more to the stamp duty which is imposed on the newspapers here, in France, and in other countries, to start a daily paper is a very expensive business that can only be undertaken with the help of a large amount of capital; so that by this means the possibility of appealing to the *thought of the people*, of enlightening and leading them, has become a privilege of the possessors of capital.

If this were not the case, gentlemen, you would possess *very* different, and much *better* journals!

It is interesting to see, gentlemen, at what an early period this attempt of the richer Bourgeoise to make the press one of the privileges of capital, showed itself, and in what a naive undisguised form. On the 24th July, 1789, a few days after the storming of the Bastille, and therefore soon after the Bourgeoisie had seized upon political power, the representatives of the Commune of Paris issued a decree by which the printers were declared to be responsible for the publication of pamphlets

or leaflets written by authors "*sans existence connue.*" The freedom of the press which was thus seized upon, was to be allowed therefore only to writers of known means of subsistence. *Property* appears therefore as the the condition of the freedom of the press, nay in fact of the morality of a writer! This *naiveté* of the first days of the rule of the Bourgeois, only expresses in an artless and open way, what has been attained by the ingenious contrivance of caution money and stamp duty in our day.

We must be satisfied gentlemen, with these great and characteristic facts, which corroborate the view we have taken of the Middle Ages.

We have now seen, gentlemen, two periods of the world, each of which is dominated by the ruling idea of a particular class of the community which impresses its own principle on all the social arrangements of its time.

First the idea of nobility, or of the *possession of land* which forms the ruling principle of the Middle Ages, and permeates all its institutions.

This period closed with the French Revolution, although you will understand that, especially in Germany, where the change was not brought about by the people, but by very gradual and incomplete reforms introduced by the Government, numerous and important extensions of that first period of history have occurred, which even at the present day greatly hamper the progress of the Bourgeoisie.

We saw in the next place the period of history which begins at the eighteenth century with the French Revo-

lution, which has for its principle *large private property*, or capital, and makes this into the privilege which pervades all the arrangements of society, and is the condition of participation in directing the will of the State and determining its aims.

This period also, little as outward appearances seem to show it, is virtually already closed.

On the 24th February 1848, the dawn of a new period of history appeared.

. For on that day in France (that country in whose great struggles the victory or the defeat of freedom means victory or defeat for the whole human race) a revolution broke out which called a working man into the provisional Government, declared that the object of the State was the improvement of the lot of the working classes, and proclaimed the universal and direct right to the suffrage, by which every citizen who had attained his twenty-first year, without any reference to the amount of his property, received an equal share in the government of the State in the direction of its will and the determination of its aims.

You see, gentlemen, that if the Revolution of 1789 was the Revolution of the *Tiers état*, the *Third* class, it is now the *Fourth* class, which in 1789 was still enfolded within the third class and appeared to be identical with it, which will now raise its principle to be the dominating principle of the community, and cause all its arrangements to be permeated by it.

But here, in the domination of the fourth class comes to light this immense difference, that the fourth class is the last and the outside of all, the disinterested class

of the community, which sets up and can set up *no* further exclusive condition, either legal or actual, neither nobility nor landed possessions nor the possession of capital, which it could make into a new *privilege* and force upon the arrangements of society.

We are *all* working men in so far as we have even the *will* to make ourselves useful in any way to the community.

This *Fourth* class in whose heart therefore *no* germ of a new privilege is contained, is for this very reason synonomous with the *whole human race. Its* interest is in truth the interest of the *whole of humanity*, its freedom is the freedom of humanity itself, and its domination is the domination of *all.*

Whoever therefore invokes the idea of the working class as the ruling principle of society, in the sense in which I have explained it to you, does not put forth a cry that divides and separates the classes of society. On the contrary, he utters a cry of *reconciliation*, a cry which embraces the whole of the community, a cry for doing away with all the contradictions in every circle of society ; a cry of *union* in which all should join who do not wish for privileges, and the oppression of the people by privileged classes ; a cry of *love* which having once gone up from the heart of the people, will *for ever remain the true cry of the people*, and whose meaning will make it still a *cry of love*, even when it sounds the war cry of the people.

We will now consider the principle of the working class as the ruling principle of the community only in three of its relations :—

(1) In relation to the formal means of its realisation.

(2) In relation to its moral significance.

(3) In relation to the political conception of the object of the State, which is inherent in that principle.

We cannot on this occasion enter upon its other aspects, and even those to which we have referred can be only very cursorily examined in the short time that remains to us.

The formal means of carrying out this principle is the universal and direct suffrage which we have already discussed. I say universal and *direct* suffrage, gentlemen, not that mere universal suffrage which we had in the year 1848. The introduction of two degrees in the electoral act, namely, original electors and electors simply, is nothing but an ingenious method purposely introduced with the object of falsifying as far as possible the will of the people by means of the electoral act.

It is true that even universal and direct suffrage is no magic wand, gentlemen, which is able to protect you from temporary mistakes.

We have seen in France two bad elections following one another, in 1848 and 1849. But universal and direct suffrage is the *only* means which in the long run of itself corrects the mistakes to which its momentary wrong use may lead. It is that spear which heals the wounds itself has made. It is impossible in the long run with universal and direct suffrage that the elected body should be any other than the exact and true likeness of the people which has elected it.

The people must therefore at all times regard uni-

versal and direct suffrage as its indispensable political weapon, as the most fundamental and important of its demands.

I will now glance at the *moral* significance of the principle of society which we are considering.

It is possible that the idea of converting the principle of the *lower classes* of society into the ruling principle of the State and the community may appear to be extremely dangerous and immoral, and to threaten the destruction of morality and education by a "modern barbarism."

And it is no wonder that this idea should be so regarded at the present day since even public opinion, gentlemen—I have already indicated by what means, namely, the newspapers—receives its impressions from the mint of *capital*, and from the hands of the privileged wealthy Bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless this fear is only a prejudice, and it can be proved on the contrary, that the idea would exhibit the greatest advance and triumph of morality that the history of the world has ever recorded.

That view is a prejudice I repeat, and it is simply the prejudice of *the present time* which is dominated by privilege.

At another time, namely, that of the first French Republic of the year 1793 (of which I have already told you that I cannot enter into further particulars on this occasion, but that it was destined to perish by its own want of definite aims) the *opposite* prejudice prevailed. It was then a current dogma that all the upper classes were immoral and corrupt, and that only the lower

classes were good and moral. In the new declaration of the rights of man issued by the French convention, that powerful constituent assembly of France, this was actually laid down by a special article, namely, article nineteen, which runs as follows, "Toute institution qui ne suppose le peuple bon, et le magistrat corruptible, est vicieuse." "Every institution which does not assume that the people are good and the magistracy contemptible is vicious." You see that this is exactly the opposite to the happy faith now required, according to which there is no greater sin than to doubt of the goodwill and the virtue of the Government, while it is taken for granted that *the people* are a sort of tiger and a sink of corruption.

At the time of which we are speaking the opposite dogma had advanced so far, that almost every one who had a whole coat on his back was thought to be a bad man, or at least an object of suspicion; and virtue, purity, and patriotic morality were thought to be possessed only by those who had no decent clothes. It was the period of sansculottism.

This view, gentlemen, is in fact founded on a *truth*, but it presents itself in an *untrue* and *perverted* form. Now there is nothing more dangerous than a truth which presents itself in an untrue perverted form. For in whatever way we deal with it, we are certain to go wrong. If we adopt such a truth in its untrue perverted form, it will lead at certain times to most pernicious destruction, as was the case with sansculottism. But if we regard the whole statement as untrue on account of its untrue perverted form, then we are much worse.

For we have rejected a *truth*, and, in the case before us, a truth without the recognition of which not a single sound step in our political life can be taken.

The only course that remains open to us, therefore, is to set aside the untrue and perverted form of the statement, and to bring its true essence into distinct relief.

The public opinion of the present day is inclined, as I have said, to declare the whole statement to be utterly untrue, and mere declamation on the part of Rousseau and the French Revolution. But even if it were possible to adopt the course of rejection in the case of Rousseau and the French Revolution, it is quite impossible to do so in the case of one of the greatest of German philosophers, the centenary of whose birth-day will be celebrated in this town next month: I allude to the philosopher Fichte, one of the greatest thinkers of all nations and times.

Even Fichte declares expressly in so many words, that the higher the rank the greater the moral deterioration, that—these are his very words — "Wickedness increases in proportion to the elevation of rank."

But Fichte did not develope the ultimate ground of this statement. He adduces, as the ground of this corruption, the selfishness and egoism of the upper classes. But then the question must immediately arise, whether selfishness does not also prevail in the lower classes, or why it should prevail less in these. Nay it must at first sight appear to be an extraordinary paradox to assert that less selfishness should prevail in the lower classes than in the higher who have a considerable advantage

over them in education and training which are recognised as moralising elements.

The following is the true ground of what as I said appears at first sight to be extraordinary paradox.

In a long period in the past, as we have seen, the development of the people, which is the life-breath of history, proceeds by an ever advancing abolition of the privileges which guarantee to the higher classes their position as higher and ruling classes. The desire to maintain this, in other words their personal interest, brings therefore every member of the higher classes who has not once for all by a high range of vision elevated himself above his purely personal existence—and you will understand, gentlemen, that this can never be more than a very small number of exceptional characters—into a position thoroughly *hostile* in principle to the development of the people, to the progress of education and science, to the advance of culture, to all the life-breath and victory of historic life.

It is this opposition of the personal interest of the higher classes to the development of the nation in culture which evokes the great and necessary immorality of the higher classes. It is a life, whose daily conditions you need only represent to yourselves, in order to perceive the deep inward deterioration to which it must lead. To be compelled daily to *oppose* all that is great and good, to be obliged to *grieve* at its successes, to rejoice at its failures, to restrain its further progress, to be obliged to undo or to execrate the advantages it has already attained. It is to lead their life as in the country of an *enemy*—and this enemy is the moral community of their

own people, amongst whom they live, and *for* whom to strive constitutes all true morality. It is to lead their lives, I say, as in the country of an *enemy*; this enemy is their own people, and the fact that it is regarded and treated as their enemy must generally at all events be cunningly concealed, and this hostility must more or less artfully be covered with a veil.

And to this we must add that either they must do all this *against* the voice of their own conscience and intelligence, or they must have stifled the voice by habit so as not to be oppressed by it, or lastly they must have never known this voice, never known anything different and better than the religion of their own advantage!

This life, gentlemen, leads therefore necessarily to a thorough depreciation and contempt of all striving to realise an ideal, to a compassionate smile at the bare mention of the great name of the Idea, to a deeply seated want of sympathy and even antipathy to all that is beautiful and great, to a complete swallowing up of every moral element in us, by the one passion of selfish seeking for our own advantage, and of immoderate desire for pleasure.

It is this *opposition*, gentlemen, between personal interest and the development of the nation in culture, which the lower classes, happily for them, are *without*.

It is unfortunately true that there is always enough of selfishness in the lower classes, much more than there should be, but this selfishness of theirs, wherever it is found, is the fault of single persons, of *individuals*, and not the inevitable fault of the *class*.

A very reasonable instinct warns the members of the lower classes, that so long as each of them relates himself only to himself, and each one thinks only of himself, he can hope for no important improvement in his position.

But the more earnestly and deeply the lower classes of society strive after the improvement of their condition as a class, the improvement of the *lot of their class*, the more does this personal interest, instead of opposing the movement of history and thereby being condemned to that immorality of which we have spoken, assume a *direction* which thoroughly accords with the development of the whole *people*, with the victory of the *idea*, with the advance of *culture*, with the living principle of history itself, which is no other than the development of *freedom*. Or in other words, as we have already seen, *its* interest is the interest of the entire human race.

You are therefore in this happy position, gentlemen, that instead of its being possible for you to be dead to the idea, you are on the contrary urged to the deepest sympathy for it by your own *personal interests*. You are in the happy position that the idea which constitutes your true personal interest, is one with the throbbing pulse of history, and with the living principle of moral development. You are able therefore to devote yourselves with *personal passion* to this historical development, and to be certain that the more strongly this *passion* grows and burns within you in the true sense in which I have explained it to you, the higher is the moral position you have attained.

These are the reasons, gentlemen, why the dominion

of the fourth class in the State must produce such an efflorescence of morality, culture, and science, as has not yet been witnessed in history.

But there is yet another reason for this, one which is most intimately connected with all the views I have explained to you, and forms their keystone.

The fourth estate not only has a different formal political principle from that of the Bourgeoisie, namely, the universal direct franchise, instead of the census of the Bourgeoisie, and not only has through its position in life a different relation to moral forces than the higher classes, but has also—and partly in consequence of these—quite another and a different conception of the moral *object of the State* from that of the Bourgeoisie.

According to the Bourgeoisie, the moral idea of the State is exclusively this, that the unhindered exercise by himself of his own faculties should be guaranteed to each individual.

If we were all equally strong, equally clever, equally educated, and equally rich, this might be regarded as a sufficient and a moral idea.

But since we neither *are* nor *can be* thus equal, this idea is not satisfactory, and therefore necessarily leads in its consequences to deep immorality, for it leads to this, that the stronger, the cleverer, and the richer fleece the weaker and pick their pockets.

The moral idea of the State according to the working class on the contrary is this, that the unhindered and free activity of individual powers exercised by the individual is not *sufficient*, but that something *must be added* to this in a morally ordered community—namely,

solidarity of interests, community and reciprocity in development.

In accordance with this difference, the Bourgeoisie conceive the moral object of the State to consist solely and exclusively in the protection of the personal freedom and the property of the individual.

This is a policeman's idea, gentlemen, a policeman's idea for this reason, because it represents to itself the State from a point of view of a policeman, whose whole function consists in preventing robbery and burglary. Unfortunately this policeman's idea is not only familiar to genuine liberals, but is even to be met with not unfrequently among so-called democrats, owing to their defective imagination. If the Bourgeoisie would express the logical inference from their idea, they must maintain that according to it if there were no such thing as robbers and thieves, the State itself would be entirely superfluous.*

Very differently, gentlemen, does the fourth estate regard the object of the State, for it apprehends it in its true nature.

History, gentlemen, is a struggle with nature; with

* This idea of the State, which in fact does away with the State, and changes it into a mere union of egoistic interests, is the idea of the State as regarded by *liberalism*, and historically was produced by it. It forms by the power which it has necessarily obtained and which stands in direct relation to its superficiality, the true danger of spiritual and moral decay, the true danger, which threatens us at this day, of a "modern barbarism." In Germany happily it is strongly opposed by the ancient learning which has once for all become the indestructible foundation of German thought. From this proceeds the view "that it is necessary to enlarge the notion of the State to the fullest extent to which in my opinion it is possible to enlarge it, that the *State should be the organisation, in which the whole virtue of man should realise itself.*" (Augustus Boeth's address to his University of the 22nd March, 1862.)

the misery, the ignorance, the poverty, the weakness, and consequent slavery in which we were involved when the human race came upon the scene in the beginning of history. The progressive *victory* over this weakness—this is the development of freedom which history displays to us.

In this struggle we should never have made one step forward, nor shall we ever advance one step more by acting on the principle of *each one for himself, each one alone.*

It is *the State* whose function it is to carry on *this development of freedom*, this development of the human race until its freedom is attained.

The State is this unity of individuals into a moral whole, a unity which increases a million-fold the strength of *all* the individuals who are comprehended in it, and multiplies a million times the power which would be at the disposal of them *all* as individuals.

The object of the State, therefore, is not only to *protect* the personal freedom and property of the individual with which he is supposed according to the idea of the Bourgeoisie to have entered the State. On the contrary, the object of the State is precisely this, to place the individuals *through this* union in a position to attain to *such objects*, and reach such a *stage of existence* as they *never* could have reached as individuals; to make them capable of acquiring an amount of *education, power*, and *freedom* which would have been wholly unattainable by them as individuals.

Accordingly the object of the State is to bring man to positive expansion, and progressive development, in

other words, to bring the destiny of man—that is the culture of which the human race *is capable*—into *actual existence*; it is the *training and development* of the human race to freedom.

This is the true moral nature of the State, gentlemen, its true and high mission. So much is this the case, that from the beginning of time through the very *force* of events it has more or less been carried out by the State without the exercise of will, and unconsciously even against the will of its leaders.

But the working class, gentlemen, the lower classes of the community in general, through the helpless condition in which its members find themselves placed as individuals, have always acquired the deep instinct, that this is and must be the duty of the State, to help the individual by means of the union of all to such a development as he would be *incapable* of attaining as an individual.

A State therefore which was ruled by the idea of the working class, would no longer be driven, as all States have hitherto been, unconsciously and against their will by the nature of things, and the force of circumstances, but it would make this moral nature of the State its mission, with perfect clearness of vision and complete consciousness. It would complete with *unchecked desire* and perfect *consistency*, that which hitherto has only been wrung in scanty and imperfect fragments from wills that were opposed to it, and *for this very reason*—though time does not permit me to explain in any detail this necessary connection of cause and effect—it would produce a soaring flight of the human

spirit, a development of an amount of happiness, culture, well-being, and freedom without example in the history of the world, and in comparison with which, the most favourable conditions that have existed in former times would appear but dim shadows of the reality.

This it is, gentlemen, which must be called the working man's idea of the State, his conception of the object of the State, which, as you see is just as different from the bourgeois conception of the object of the State, as the principle of the working class, of the claim of *all* to direct the will of the State, or universal suffrage, is different from the principle held by the Bourgeoisie, the census.

The series of ideas which I have explained to you must be regarded as the idea of the working class. It is this that I had in view when I spoke to you, at the commencement of my lecture, of the connection of the particular period of history in which we live with the idea of the working class. It is *this* period of history beginning with February, 1848, to which has been allotted the task of bringing this idea of the State into actual existence. We may congratulate ourselves, gentlemen, that we have been born at a time which is destined to witness this the most glorious work of history, and that we are permitted to take a part in accomplishing it.

But on all who belong to the working class the duty of taking up an entirely new attitude is imposed, if there is any truth in what I have said.

Nothing is more calculated to impress upon a class a worthy and moral character, than the consciousness

that it is destined to become a ruling class, that it is called upon to raise the principle of its class to the principle of the entire age, to convert *its idea* into the leading idea of the whole of society and thus to form this society by impressing upon it its own character.

The high and world-wide honour of this destiny must occupy all your thoughts. Neither the load of the oppressed, nor the idle dissipation of the thoughtless, nor even the harmless frivolity of the insignificant, are henceforth becoming to you. You are the rock on which the Church of the present is to be built.

It is the lofty moral earnestness of *this* thought which must with devouring exclusiveness possess your spirits, fill your minds, and shape your whole lives, so as to make them worthy of it, conformable to it, and always related to it. It is the moral earnestness of this thought which must never leave you, but must be present to your heart in your workshops during the hours of labour, in your leisure hours, during your walks, at your meetings, and even when you stretch your limbs to rest upon your hard couches, it is *this* thought which must fill and occupy your minds till they lose themselves in dreams. The more exclusively you immerse yourselves in the moral earnestness of this thought, the more undividedly you give yourselves up to its glowing fervour, by so much the more, be assured, will you *hasten the time* within which our present period of history will have to fulfil its task, so much the sooner will you bring about the accomplishment of this task.

If there be only *two or three* of you, gentlemen, who

now hear me, in whom I should be so happy as to have kindled the moral glow of this idea in its depth as I feel it and have described it to you, then I should already have reaped a rich harvest and a rich reward for my lecture.

Before all things, gentlemen, your hearts must remain strangers to despondency and doubt, to which a view of the events of history not sufficiently wide for this idea may easily lead.

Thus for example it is distinctly *not true* that the French Republic was destroyed by the Coup d' Etat of December 1851.

That which could not last in France, that which really perished at that time was not *the* Republic, but that Republic which, as I have already shown you, abolished universal suffrage by the electoral law of the 30th of May 1850, and introduced a disguised census for the exclusion of the working men. That was therefore the Bourgeois Republic, which desired to impress the stamp of the Bourgeoisie, the domination of capital, on the Republicanised State. *This* it was which enabled the French usurper, with the pretence of restoring universal suffrage, to destroy the Republic, which would otherwise have found an impregnable bulwark in the breasts of the French working men.

That then which really could not last in France, and was destroyed at that time was not *the* Republic, but the *Bourgeois* Republic; and thus it is established according to the true view of history, exactly as in this example, that the period on which we entered in February 1848, tolerates no longer any State which, no

matter whether in a monarchical or republican form, desires to impress the ruling political stamp of the third class on the community, or to maintain it in itself.

From the lofty mountain summits of science, gentlemen, the dawn of the new day is seen earlier than below in the turmoil of daily life.

Have you ever witnessed, gentlemen, a sunrise from a lofty mountain?

A purple streak colours the extreme verge of the horizon blood red, announcing the new light; mist and clouds gather, roll themselves into a mass, throw themselves against the glow of morning, and succeed in covering its rays for a moment. But no power in the world can avail to hinder the slow and majestic rising of the sun itself, which an hour later stands in the firmament visible to all, and giving light and warmth to all the earth.

What an hour is in this spectacle which nature presents to us every day, one or two centuries are in the far more imposing spectacle of a sunrise in the world's history.

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